1998-99. It declined marginally to 6.4% in 1999-2000, but sharply to 5.2% in 2000-2001.

(c) and (d) As per the latest figures released by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) investment rate measured by the ratio of gross domestic formation to GDP at current market prices declined from 25.0% in 1997-98 to 23% in 1998-99 and increased to 23.3 per cent in 1999-2000.

(e) According to the 55th Round of Survey on Employment and Unemployment conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) during July 1999-June 2000, the employment in absolute numbers is placed at 397 million in 1999-2000 as against 374.45 million in 1993-94. The per capita income at constant (1993-94 prices) prices has risen from Rs. 7698 in 1993-94 to Rs. 10204 in 1999-2000 and further to Rs. 10561 in 2000-01. Besides, the proportion of people below the poverty line in the country, has also declined from 36% in 1993-94 to 26.1% in 1999-2000. These trends reflect that the purchasing power has not only increased but has become more broad based.

Import of Natural Gas from Bangladesh

* 128. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangladesh Commerce Minister has expressed desire to export natural gas to India; and

(b) if so, the action taken to explore the possibilities at any early date?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Government have formed a consortium of three oil Public Sector Undertakings, namely, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Gas Authority of India Limited and Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited to participate in any venture for import of natural gas from Bangladesh.